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TORRINGTON
RURAL DISTRICT
1951.

REPORTS
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND SANITARY SURVEYOR

FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31ST DECEMBER, 1951.

GREAT TORRINGTON :
Printed by COPP & SON, "Osborne Printing Works,"
4, Well Street.

STAFF.

PART TIME OFFICER:

Medical Officer of Health—

DR. E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

WHOLE TIME OFFICERS:

Sanitary Inspector and Building Surveyor—

F. G. GANE, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

Clerk—MRS. V. DARCH.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
TORRINGTON.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Torrington
Rural District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

We have pleasure in presenting our ANNUAL
REPORTS for the year ended 31st December, 1951.

We are, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,

Medical Officer of Health.

F. G. GANE, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.,

Sanitary Inspector & Building Surveyor.

Torrington Rural District.

❖ 1951 ❖

General Statistics.

Area (Acres)...	...	...	...	...	...	...	79,825
Population (R.G.)	...	...	...	...	...	...	7,521
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,528
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	£21,577
Sum realised by a Penny Rate	..	...	...	...	...	...	£88 17s. 10d.

Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

Live Births Male 26, Female 31, Total 57.

Decrease of 9 on previous year.

Birth Rate per 1000 of estimated Population ... 7·5.

Deaths ... 54.

Death Rate per 1000 of estimated Resident Population ... 7·1

Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health.

General Sanitary Conditions of the District.

Nursing.

The District is provided with midwives and nurses under the National Health Scheme.

Hospitals.

The District is accommodated by the hospitals at Torrington, Bideford, Barnstaple and Exeter which are administered by a local Regional Board.

Clinics.

These work efficiently through the County Council and other authorities.

Isolation Hospitals.

The majority of our patients are received by the Bideford Isolation Hospital. Special facilities are made for smallpox, etc.

Tuberculosis is admirably looked after by the Barnstaple clinic.

Ambulance Services.

These are very efficiently worked.

Laboratory Services.

These are available and function well.

Maternity Services.

These are provided by Midwives and Hospitals. Baby clinics are very popular. I suggest that normal cases should be encouraged to use the Home Service available and start off in the proper manner.

Schools.

These are being brought up to date—many of their water and sanitary systems could be improved.

The children look well and happy. As a suggestion for saving money—if a decent mid-day meal is given, is $\frac{1}{3}$ of a pint of milk, 5 days a week, for say 8 months a year, really worth the expense except for propaganda? Perhaps double the quantity might be given to the few obvious cases—a very small percentage.

Dairies and Cowsheds.

These are now largely administered by experts.

Venereal Disease.

There is very little and what there is, is imported from greater wage earning centres. There is an excellent clinic at Barnstaple.

Infestation.

This is very small amongst locals and the school nurses stop it quickly.

Mental Health.

The County looks after this very conscientiously.

Water.

This is still poor in quality and quantity, but some villages hope to get main water soon.

Drainage.

This is rather inadequate as a whole.

Immunisation against Diphtheria.

The results are very satisfactory. Immunisation must be kept up to date.

Infectious Diseases.

During the year the following were reported :

Whooping Cough	29 cases
Scarlet Fever	1 case
Pneumonia	10 cases
Tuberculosis	2 cases
Measles	26 cases
Dysentery	2 cases



Annual Report of Sanitary Inspector.

DETAILS OF INSPECTIONS.

Dwellings inspected under Housing Acts	...	...	12
Dwellings inspected under Public Health Acts	...	27	
Re-inspections under Housing Acts	...	...	14
Re-inspections under Public Health Acts	...	...	35
Keeping of Animals	...	...	4
Offensive accumulations	...	...	1
Inquiries into cases of Infectious Disease	...	...	3
Number of rooms disinfected	...	...	3
Visits to Factories	...	...	16
„ „ Bakehouses	...	...	4
„ „ Schools	...	...	6
Food Inspections	...	...	4
Number of Water samples	...	...	8
Building inspections under Bye-laws	...	...	169
Visits to Council Housing Sites	...	...	88
Defective drains	...	...	27
Drains tested	...	...	25
Plans investigated	...	...	59
Petroleum inspections...	...	...	12
Dirty houses	...	...	2
Farm Water supplies	...	...	11
Miscellaneous	...	...	45

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

PART I OF THE ACT.

1.—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors)

Premises (1)	M/c line No. (2)	Number on Register (3)	Number of			M/c line No. (7)
			Inspections (4)	Written notices (5)	Occupiers prosecuted (6)	
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities...	1	56	20	—	—	1
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies (a) Subject to the Local Authorities (Transfer of Enforcement Order, 1938†	2	—	—	—	—	2
(b) Others	3	—	—	—	—	3
(iii) Other Premises under the Act‡ (excluding outworkers' premises)	4	—	—	—	—	4
TOTAL		56	20	—	—	

2.—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars (1)	M/c line No. (2)	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted (7)	M/c line No. (8)
		Found (3)	Remedied (4)	To H.M. Inspector (5)	Referred By H.M. Inspector (6)		
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	5						5
Overcrowding (S.2)	6						6
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	7						7
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	8						8
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	9						9
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)							
(a) Insufficient	10						10
(b) Unsuitable or defective	11						11
(c) Not separate for sexes	12						12
Other offences (not including offences relating to Homework	13						13
TOTAL	60	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	60

OUTWORK—(Sections 110 and 111). Nil.

HOUSING.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :

(1)	(a)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	39
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	88
(2)	(a)	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	12
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	26
(3)		Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	Nil
(4)		Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	12

2. Remedy of Defects during the year without service of formal Notices :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	14
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3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

A. Proceedings under Section 17, 18, and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930

(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ...	Nil
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—	
	(a) by owners	Nil
	(b) by local authority in default of owners ...	Nil

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—

(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	Nil
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—	
	(a) by owners	Nil
	(b) by local authority in default of owners ...	Nil

C. Proceedings under Sections 19 and 21 of the Housing Act, 1930.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	Nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	Nil

D. Proceedings under Section 20 of the Housing Act, 1930

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	Nil
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	Nil

Improvements carried out and nuisances abated:—

<i>External.</i>	<i>No. of houses.</i>
Walls repaired	13
Roofs repaired	7
Guttering repaired	6
Downspouts repaired	6
Chimneys repaired	3
Water supply laid on into houses	10
New pumps provided	2
Wells cleansed	3
Well steinings repaired	1
New lengths drain laid	25
Defective drains repaired	13
New inspection chambers	10
Septic tanks repaired	1
New septic tanks	8
New gullies	8
New W.C.'s	5
Water supply laid on to W.C.'s	5
W.C. cisterns renewed	1
New washing accommodation	2
Outbuildings repaired	4
<i>Internal.</i>	
Walls replastered	12
Ceilings replastered	9
Windows repaired	6

Doors repaired	...	...	...	...	5
Floors repaired	...	...	...	...	5
Cooking appliances repaired or renewed	...	...	...	...	4
New sinks	...	...	...	...	3
New sculleries	...	...	...	..	2
Baths installed	...	...	...	...	5
Food storage improved		...	...	...	4
Stairs repaired	...	...	...	..	3
Hot water systems fixed		...	...	...	5

New Housing Accommodation.

Number of new houses erected by local authority	...	8
„ „ new houses erected by private enterprise...		3
„ „ premises converted into dwellings	...	1

COUNCIL HOUSING PROGRAMME.

8 houses were completed during the year, and at the close of the year another 8 were under construction. 52 houses have been completed in the post-war period. There was a noticeable slowing down of the "Drive" by the end of the year as the effects of reduced allocations became apparent.

Now that most parishes have at least a pair of houses built or contracted for, I believe the Council would be well advised to embark on a policy of building on a larger scale in selected villages. The system to date of dividing an allocation into pairs of houses to be scattered all over the district, cannot be an economical proposition and is the cause of considerable delay in getting tenders approved and houses completed. One also wonders whether tenants will continue to occupy some of these remotely sited houses when the housing shortage abates in more populous areas. The absence of a piped water supply has been a considerable handicap to large scale development in the past and in some cases where six houses have been erected on a site wells have run dry in the summer and water has had to be transported. The Council ought therefore to concentrate on building for the time being, in villages where a piped supply is, or will soon be available.

CIVIL BUILDING LICENCES.

The issue of licences is carried out by a small Committee of the Council.

Licences issued in respect of repairs, maintenance or miscellaneous building work to housing.

No. of licences issued.
14

Value in £
3,433

The permitted “ceiling” is quite inadequate to deal with urgent applications.

WATER SUPPLIES.

During the year the North Devon Water Board made steady progress in laying new mains in the parishes of your district to be served by the 1st instalment of the scheme. Water is urgently required in the other parishes and it is hoped that permission to proceed will not be long withheld. Until a mains water supply is available to all parts of the district we shall continue to get seasonal shortages of water and many of the shallow wells will give cause for concern. 140 houses in the village of Winkleigh have now been connected to the mains supply.

FARM WATER SUPPLIES.

The Devon Agricultural Executive Committee have maintained close co-operation with me and as a result several potential supplies have been investigated and approved during the year.

REFUSE COLLECTION.

A monthly collection is operated by the Council and this is carried out by contract. Refuse is deposited on three tips at Winkleigh, Merton and St. Giles. Paper salvage is carried out in conjunction with Torrington Borough Council but the response to appeals is very poor.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

Considerable progress was made in the construction of new sewers and sewage disposal plant at Winkleigh. Some progress was made in preparation of schemes for Shebbear and Sheepwash. With the advent of a piped water supply the provision of sewerage schemes to the area is a matter of urgency.

RODENT DESTRUCTION.

In conjunction with Torrington Borough Council the Council employs a full time Rodent Operator.

The following work in the Torrington Rural District was carried out during the year :—

Number of Survey calls made...	...	...	...	924
Number of visits to lay baits on private premises	...	...	...	1112
Number of visits to lay baits on business premises	...	...	...	328
Number of visits to lay baits on refuse tips	...	...	...	130
Number of private premises treated	...	...	...	243
Number of business premises treated	...	...	...	69

It is estimated that a total of 3,250 rats were destroyed during the year.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

There are no offensive trades in this district.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Animals intended for human consumption in the district are slaughtered at the Public Abattoir at Bideford, where the carcasses and offals are inspected before allocation.

The following other foods were condemned during the year :

8	8 oz. boxes cheese
1	2 lb. tin of marmalade
2	15 lb. tins of ham
28lb.	domestic cooking fat

ICE-CREAM.

No ice-cream is manufactured in the district. 8 licences to sell ice-cream have been issued. In each case factory pre-packed ice-cream is sold.

MILK AND DAIRIES ACTS AND ORDERS.

There are no designated milk bottling establishments in the district, and all retailers are also producers. Milk sampling is, therefore, carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture.

PETROLEUM LICENCES.

25 petroleum storage licences were issued during the year.

SLAUGHTERING LICENCES.

59 licences were issued during the year.

PLANS.

59 plans were submitted during the year, and apart from modifications, all were approved, except 1.

I attended monthly meetings of the Divisional Planning Committee of the Devon County Council.

